

Kew visitors

THE Deputy Director of the world's greatest botanical organisation visited Perth recently to see WA's famous flora.

Professor Gren Lucas, from the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, flew in for a four-day visit.

During this time he visited CALM's WA Herbarium, which is a world leader in databasing of specimens.

The herbarium at Kew has important connections with WA, since it holds many of the important early collections of Australian plants, such as those of James Drummond.

Kew herbarium receives so many enquiries about Australian flora that

an Australian botanist is based at Kew each year. Last year CALM's Terry McPharlane was the Australian botanical liaison officer.

Gren is very interested in threatened plants, so a trip to Mount Lesueur was high on his list of priorities.

"Mount Lesueur was absolutely stunning. It was just as diverse as a rainforest. For instance, we saw 40 different legume species in 24 hours," he said.

"In a world sense WA's flora is very important. The State has half the number of species of the whole of Europe. It is important to rationalise the manpower available to ensure there is

good management of the world's flora where it is needed."

Gren also toured the jarrah forest and saw the endemic species in the Darling Scarp and inspected the research being done on rare flora at Kings Park, including cryostorage of endangered species, also a world first.

"It is very important to have a uniform system for recording data on the world's flora. We need to know objectively how rare each plant is, so that we can prioritise management and resources."

"We also need to understand the whole biology of each plant, not just give it a name."



Neville Marchant of CALM, Gren Lucas and Michael Locke from Kew Gardens and Kings Park botanist Kingsley Dixon. Photo by Carolyn Thomson

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